

**The Centennial Celebration**  
*of*  
**Runaway Pond, Glover, Vermont**

**Notes on the  
Day's Events  
and**

**Historical Address**

*by*

**Honorable F. W. Baldwin**

**In Full**

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**June Sixth, Nineteen Hundred and Ten**

# Centennial Celebration of Runaway Pond.

In spite of threatening weather Monday, June 6, 1910, a crowd estimated by good judges at about two thousand, gathered at the site of Runaway pond in Glover for the events of the Centennial Celebration of the running out of Long Pond as arranged by the Orleans County Historical society; the Glover selectmen, W. O. King, G. W. Anderson and C. M. Borland; the Glover committee composed of Mr. and Mrs. H. N. Davis, Mr. and Mrs. A. P. Bean, Mr. and Mrs. C. S. Parker and Fred Corliss; and the Greensboro committee composed of Dr. F. C. Kinney, A. C. Chase and A. S. Clary. The salute of guns was fired between 10 and 11 o'clock and the picnic dinner was arranged during the noon hour.

At the afternoon exercises the marker erected by the selectmen of Glover lettered as follows:

RUNAWAY POND.  
In COMMEMORATION  
OF THE  
BREAKING AWAY OF  
LONG POND  
JUNE 6, 1810,  
ERECTED BY THE  
TOWN OF GLOVER  
JUNE 6, 1910.

was unveiled by Miss Ina Paige of Barton assisted by Miss Alice Kelton of Glover, both descendants of those present at the letting out of the water of the pond 100 years ago. W. O. King, as chairman of the selectmen presented the marker. Adjournment was then taken to a more convenient part of the pond bed where the rest of the exercises took place. In the absence of B. F. D. Carpenter, president of the historical society, E. A. Cook of Lyndonville presided. Besides F. W. Baldwin's speech, which was the important event of the day and is here given in full Dr. C. L. French of Clinton, Mass., Olin L. French of Brattleboro and Charles Cutler of

West Glover, all descendants, made appropriate remarks. The Glover band dispensed good music throughout the day's events.

## Mr. Baldwin's Address.

"We are met on this June afternoon to celebrate the centennial of an event unparalleled in the history of Vermont. A company gathered June 6, 1810, on the shore of a pond, which covered this ground, one and one-half miles long, three-fourths of a mile wide and over one hundred feet deep, with no intention of disturbing the pond, and in five hours from the time they arrived, the pond was gone.

"I have endeavored to make this address historical. The facts as I here give them have been derived largely from the following sources; Thompson's History of Vermont; Vermont Historical Gazetteer, Child's History of Vermont, Danville North Star, June 16, 1810. Letter of Joseph Owen June 25 1810. Address of Rev. Pliny H. White, 1860. Article by O. V. Percival in 1887. E. T. Wilson in 1890. Loring Frost, J. M. Currier and I. Parker, article of Owen Percival and Parker being in the 'Proceedings Orleans County Historical society, 1887.'

"The town of Glover was granted to General John Glover June 27, 1781, and chartered to the same man, and his associates November 20, 1783.

"In 1794 or 1795 there was built a road through this township commencing at the Hazen road in Greensboro and extending through Glover, Barton, Brownington and Salem to Derby; the making of this road was very crude, simply cutting out the fallen trees, falling the few trees that could not be got around and bridging the streams with logs and poles; it was under the direction of Timothy Hinman of Derby.

"The settlement of this township was commenced about 1797, by James Vance, who made the first clearing on lot number 140, being just east of West Glover village, and erected the first frame house, which I am informed is still standing. The next clearing was made by Ralph Parker on lot No. 116, at the southerly end of Glover pond, since known as 'Parker' pond and opened the first tavern, and it was near this place where the first church was built and the first burial ground established; all this done along the 'Hinman' road.

"Also in 1797, Samuel Cook commenced a clearing and built a house on lot No. 82, the same lot now owned by N. H. Wilson. Previous to 1810 a road had been made from near the Parker tavern, southeasterly over 'Hardy hill,' crossing the Glover branch of Barton river on what has been known as the Philander Owen farm. From this point one road went easterly to the settlement known as 'Keene's Corner,' so named because several living about there came from Keene, N. H., and from there to Barton; and one road southerly to the Samuel Cook clearing and thence to Sheffield and Wheelock. It was on this road, and the Glover branch of Barton river, a short distance south of the junction of these two roads, where the stream dropped down through a rocky gorge, was located Aaron Wilson's mills, that were swept away by the letting out of Long Pond.

"It was on the 'Hinman road,' in Barton where it crossed Barton river near the place now known as the David Colliston place that the David Blodgett sawmill at this time was swept away.

"At the time the town of Glover was granted, there were five sizable natural ponds within its borders; Glover pond, afterwards called Parker pond, in the northern part, Daniels, in the western part, Chambers, afterwards called Stone pond, near the center, Mud and Long in the southeastern part, all of which except Long discharged their waters into Barton river, thence into Lake Memphremagog.

"The valley immediately north of Mud pond was narrow with steep sides

until you came to the outlet of Chambers, now Stone pond, where it was a little wider, it soon narrowed and continued so until was reached the vicinity of the Samuel Cook clearing, where the valley was quite wide, but it soon became quite narrow, until the Wilson Mills were reached, here was a deep gorge, and the stream dropped sharply to the valley below, where was a cedar swamp, the site of what is now the village of Glover. From the mills to Mud pond was covered with a heavy growth of softwood timber.

"Long pond was a beautiful body of water, situated in the extreme southeastern corner of Glover at an elevation of fourteen hundred feet above the level of the sea. It was nearly all in Glover but its outlet and its extreme southern end, which was very shallow, was in Greensboro; its outlet flowed south over nearly level land for some distance, forming the headwaters of Lamoille river and was the watershed between the Lamoille valley and the Barton river valley; in the dense forest, no road or pathway around it, and some miles from any habitation. It was about one and one-half miles in length and from one-half to three-fourths of a mile in width and probably from one hundred to one hundred and fifty feet deep in its broadest part, and did not diminish in depth until within a short distance of the northern side. The eastern shore was covered with heavy timber and sloped gradually to the water's edge. Its western boundary was a steep, rocky hill, rising abruptly from the water in places over one hundred feet, and covered with white birches to quite an extent; on this day their delicate gray green foliage was thickly interspersed with the darker green of the hemlock, spruce and cedar, now and then broken with bare patches of gray moss covered ledges, the whole one of nature's finest settings, making a picture of rare beauty. At the northeastern corner was a little valley or plain of a few rods along the shore of the pond, covered with a growth of alders and other small growth where the shore was nearly level back for about twenty rods; it then dropped off quite abruptly into 'Mud' pond which was

about one hundred rods north and about one hundred and fifty feet lower, and nearly half as large as Long pond. The outlet to this pond was north and the water from this, Daniels, and Chambers ponds fed the stream that supplied power for the Aaron Wilson grist and sawmills, which were about three and one-half miles north, the stream running through virgin forest.

"The spring of 1810 had been very dry, very little rain had fallen, consequently all streams were low and Mr. Wilson was much troubled for power, the same difficulty had existed the year previous, and he had contemplated cutting a channel across this low land northerly out of Long pond, making its outlet into Mud pond, thereby increasing his water power.

"After talking the matter over with the settlers from Barton, Sheffield, Wheelock and Glover, all of whom patronized his mills, it was thought best to have a bee and all hands take hold and divert the flow of Long pond from Lake Champlain to Lake Memphremagog. Accordingly it was arranged to meet at 'Keene's Corner' bright and early on the 6th day of June armed with shovels and axes. Why the 6th day of June was selected, the evidence from all sources seems to prove, because it was election day in New Hampshire, and many of the settlers from New Hampshire, and in that state as well as in Vermont, in that early day, election day had been observed as a holiday. I am also satisfied from statements of those who were present that Mr. Wilson was to pay them for their day's work and furnish 'spirits' for the occasion.

"In 1810 the township of Glover was substantially an unbroken forest. In the whole township there were only three hundred and eighty-seven souls. The most of the buildings were made of logs, and as you might stand upon some mountain top and look out upon the township the clearings were so few and so small that they were hardly noticeable. It was from such homes as these, that the settlers plunged into the forest, from all directions bright and early on this beautiful June morning headed for Long pond according to the recorded statement of Loring

Frost, who was one of them, about sixty men and boys, arrived at Long pond not far from eight o'clock and immediately set to work digging a ditch across this low land. Probably there never was any correct record of all those who were there. There is a record, taken from the publications named above, of the names of the following: Spencer Chamberlin, Richard Goodwin, Silas Wheeler, John Crane, Silas Clark, Joseph Owen, Daniel Frost, Loren Frost, Asa Brown, Joseph Gray, Hezekiah Bickford, Nathaniel, Silas, Jonah, Zenas, George, Barzillai and Lindol French, Aaron Wilson, Levi Partridge, Elijah Stone, Samuel Twombly, Archelaus Miles, Jr., Samuel Bean, Jacob Twombly, Benjamin Hawkins, and Robert Brown. The soil on the top was the same as you would find in any low forest land, until they came near to the pond, when they encountered a hard crust, next the water, of hard pan mixed with gravel and shell marl from one to three feet thick. Layer upon layer, apparently made by the action of the water for long years.

"This was left until the last; when this was removed letting a stream about four feet in width and ten inches deep flow into the ditch. Soon it was noticed the water was not following the ditch, that immediately after flowing over this crust, the water at once sank into the ground, and disappeared in what appeared to be quicksand. History tells us that Spencer Chamberlin, one of the company, jumped into the ditch, to ascertain the cause of the disappearance of the water, and if he had not been pulled out by the hair of his head, he would have disappeared in the quicksand. (Wilson.) Very soon a large hole appeared behind this crust of hard pan, a deep heavy rumbling sound was heard, this hole was rapidly deepening and widening, large pieces of earth from either side with the trees and bushes standing thereon, began to slide into this vortex throwing up great sheets of water. Up to this time this crust had held, but all at once this gave way to the depth of at least fifty feet, and several rods in width and went out with a loud noise.

All this low land, with the water of the pond, went whirling and plunging down into 'Mud' pond, cutting for itself a channel some fifteen or twenty rods wide, and from one hundred and twenty-five to one hundred and fifty feet deep. All of the party were very much frightened and ran for high and firm land, and as they reached the hillside, they saw the end of the pond as it were, swept out and the raging torrent go rushing past; such was the rapid move of the waters in the pond, that the sides thereof cleared of water as fast as a man would walk and such was the rush of water to the center and north end where the break was, that the pond boiled like a caldron. Two loons swimming on the pond, the suction was so great, were unable to rise and were compelled to pass out through the new outlet. All the water in this deep pond ran out in one hour and fifteen minutes, but thick black mud ran for hours. (Frost.) About two-thirds of the bottom of this pond was sidehill the rest level or nearly so; as the water receded and the bottom was reached, large fish could be seen flopping in the mud, and working down with the mud into the low places, but the mud was so deep and soft, it was impossible to get near many of the fish; in several places the mud left was very deep, and even within a few years, where post and board fences have been built on its bed, they have gradually dropped out of sight. Large quantities of eggs of a light green, some yellow, some dark gray, were left in the bottom of the pond; some seemed to be nearly as large as hens' eggs, and some very small. (Frost.)

"Different persons who have written of this event, do not agree as to the person who was left in the Wilson gristmill on the day in question. One records Mr. Wilson's wife was left to tend the mill, another that Mrs. Solomon F. Dorr, the wife of the miller, who was the son-in-law of Aaron Wilson, was left; another states that a settler was expected with 'a horse load' of grain and was engaged in grinding his own grist. I am inclined to think the latter story correct, because nearly all accounts speak of a

man who was saved and of a horse that was hitched near the mill that was lost. Besides, neither the North Star, Joseph Owen, Pliny White, O. V. Percival, or Judge Parker say anything of a woman being in the mill when the messenger from the pond arrived.

"Also there is a disagreement as to the person who made the long run from the pond to the mill ahead of the flood to notify the occupant of the mill. Isaac Parker of Coventry states it was Solomon F. Dorr, while Mr. Percival, who lived and died in Glover, and was a painstaking historical investigator, and Mr. Wilson, who spent weeks in Glover investigating this matter, say it was Spencer Chamberlin. Of those who have written upon this subject no one but Parker mentions the name of Dorr.

"I think Spencer Chamberlin was the man. All records state that when the avalanches of water, trees, and land went thundering down into Mud pond, several started to run to notify those below, one says Aaron Wilson, another the miller, but were soon distanced by Spencer Chamberlin. (Mr. Wilson states that Mr. Percival took down in writing the account of this event from Mr. Chamberlin.)

"Spencer Chamberlin has been described as a tall, wiry man, who was as fleet as a deer, a great wrestler and runner, and capable of great endurance; that he took to the high land alongside the rushing torrent; after running two miles, through the woods, he saw he had passed the head of the flood, whereupon he turned down more into the low land. He soon discovered the obstructions holding back the torrent had given way, and the great column of debris and water was close upon him, urging him to make a run for his own life as well as that of the miller. O. V. Percival in his account of it says, 'He reached the Wilson mill none too soon, for the miller, in the sound of his grinding, had not heard the roar of the approaching waters, Chamberlin and the miller, each seized a bag of meal and rushed for the hills, the water very soon overtook them, and they were glad to drop their meal and save their lives; a horse was hitched near the gristmill, but nothing

was ever seen of him, nor has any part of the mill been found to this day."

"In his race to defeat death, Chamberlin's powers of endurance were tried to their uttermost, a feat it would be difficult to parallel; he felt the effect of it to the day of his death.

"Persons are not agreed as to the exact location of the 'Wilson mills.' Of the authorities given above, the only one to refer to it is E. T. Wilson, who says, 'The site of what is now the village of Glover was about two hundred rods north of the mills.' He also says 'The mills were swept away and no vestige of them ever found,' Mr. Percival says, 'No part of the mill has been found to this day'. Mr. Parker says, 'So complete was the destruction, that it is said the mill-stones have never been seen.' Near the location of where this mill is supposed to have been situated, soon after you turn upon the road leading to the Aldrich farm can be seen the remains of a stone wall, evidently the foundation of a mill, also the remains of a stone dam and what seems to be indications of a mill race, all covered with large growing trees. Is this the remains of the foundation of the 'Wilson mills?' If not, of whose mill is it the foundation? I will leave it to the future historian to report.

"At this day, people do not agree as to which side of the stream and valley the person ran who alarmed the miller. Of the authorities given by me, not one states.

"I am inclined to think it was on the east side for the following reasons.

"1st, The party started from 'Keene's Corner' on the morning of June 6, for the pond, which was on the east side, I should expect they would return the same way they went.

"2nd, There was a road from the Philander Owen place up by the present cemetery to the Samuel Cook place, from there to Sheffield. The section along this road was open, dry land, and among the first settled in Glover.

"3rd, The section of country on the west side of the valley, immediately north of the pond, was rough, rocky and hilly, and one going that way

would have to cross the valley and stream coming from Stone pond; and immediately north of this valley the country was rough and hilly.

"4th, Mr. Wilson says, 'In a few minutes Chamberlin came in sight of the mill, and seeing a horse hitched to a post by the door he knew someone was at work inside. The mill was at his left down a decline of about thirty rods.' If Chamberlin was running on the west side of the river the mill would have been at his right.

"5th, Sarah H. Stebbins in the Monitor of February 25, 1907, says, 'The horse that was lost belonged to a Mr. Cutler, grandfather of H. R. Cutler of Barton.' This man lived at West Glover.

"Mr. Parker in his article says, 'The unfortunate man at the mill had lost his grain and his horse; he had escaped from the mill on the opposite side of the flood from his home and was obliged to wait till next day.' This would show the mill on the east side.

"The foregoing are some of the things showing that the man ran on the east side of the valley.

"History tells us, that the force of this avalanche was so great, as it dashed into Mud pond it drove its waters out like a whirlwind and down the narrow valley of its outlet, clearing its sides of the timber; the accumulations soon formed a jam, causing the water in Mud pond to raise to a great height; this soon gave way and the whole went rushing on, clearing its pathway of trees until another jam was formed and the water rose in this narrow valley, only to again break away; this was often repeated. In places great channels were washed out uncovering long sheets of ledge; in others great hills of trees, dirt and gravel were deposited, and can be seen to this day between here and Barton village; and large quantities of this gravel have been used, making the best material for constructing highways.

"The surface of 'Mud' pond was lowered about twenty feet and the south half completely filled.

"Mr. Wilson in his account of this says, 'About two hundred rods north of the Wilson mills, was a large swamp covered thickly with small cedars;

this being the lowest level the water had reached, different results were produced, the cedars were broken down; the great number of trees which the water carried along, were left and the whole buried in sand and soil from ten to fifteen feet deep, forming the site of Glover village.' He also says, 'There was a small clearing with a log house on it a little north of the W. C. Brown house in Barton Village, (at that time owned by a Mr. Cobb). It was three o'clock when the water broke into the south end, spreading to the right and left, in a column over twelve feet high. The family were all in the house at the time, when hearing a strange roaring sound, they all went out to find out the cause. When they saw the water coming they started to run to the western foothills; when part way there the mother discovered she had left her baby in the cradle. The father quickly returning caught the child in his arms and retraced his steps toward the hills, which they reached in safety. South of the house and close to it, was a large elm tree against which a large number of trees lodged, forming a dam which broke the force of the current. This saved the house, although the water rose above the eaves.

"The next day when the family returned they found that a pan of milk which had been left on the table had risen with the water and settled down as it receded and not a drop of the milk was spilt.' He also records, 'On the eastern hill at the present site of Barton village, were a few settlers, and near the brow of the hill was a schoolhouse, (on High street). The teacher hearing the noise, was frightened and dismissed the school and all went to the top of the hill where the settlers had already collected. The current on this side was swift and tore large cedars from the banks below them along the shore, whipping and thrashing them around violently, then breaking them in two with a loud report, throwing up a spray high in the air which looked like fog.' 'Dead fish could be found all the way from Mud pond to the site of David Blodgett's sawmill.'

Mr. Joseph Owen, father of Daniel and Joseph Owen, and grandfather of O. D. Owen, all of whom some of you knew, was one of the first settlers of Barton. His farm embraced lands through which a part of Church and Water streets are located, also a part of Park street. He was an eye witness of the scene. June 25, 1810, nineteen days after it occurred, he wrote his sister in Connecticut from which letter I quote the following. 'The water cleared all the timber on my low lands and on that part of Mr. Kimball's on the west side of the river which he bought last fall of General Barton. (The man from whom the town was named.) The water floated up acres of cedar timber and carried them off standing upright as the timber grew. It let the sand and mud from two to six feet deep and jams of timber fifteen or twenty feet high over many acres. The water came up to the eaves of the old house but did not carry it away. The substance that is left appears to be all quicksand as fine as flour. The mud is yet so full of water that one would sink up to his knees, except on the hillside where it has dried and become white and solid, baked by the sun. It carried off two stacks of hay for me, which stood on the intervalle west of David Blodgett's. It also carried off his sawmill and came into his house four feet deep.

"The flood reached the Lake about one-half hour after sunset, having started at the pond, at full head about two o'clock so that it travelled the whole distance of twenty miles in four hours; two thirds of the way it was flat intervalle, but when it came down through Glover it was all of fifty feet deep, in some places deeper; on my intervalle it was about twenty feet deep, in the lowest land.'

"The water in the Lake, (Memphremagog) was raised about a foot, and roiled so that the fish have all gone up Black river. They have caught it is said, near the falls on that river, (supposed to be at Coventry Falls) five tons of fish. All the fish in that stream from the pond to the Lake are dead or have run up the small streams. There were only two settlements on the river save Mr. Cobb's and mine,

but there were a good many beginnings. If the stuff that is brought down to my land is not good for anything, it has done \$500 damages at the least calculation, as it covered over fifty acres of the best land I had with four to six feet of sand. I still hope it will be good for something sometime.' Mr. Owen's judgment in this matter proved to be good, as this land today is among the best in the state.

"At the August term A.D. 1810, of the Orleans County court, held at Brown- ington, David Blodgett, of Barton commenced suit in trespass against Samuel Twombly, Jacob Twombly, Samuel Bean, Archelaus Miles, Jr., and Benjamin Hawkins of Sheffield, Robert Brown of Wheelock, Silas Clark and Richard Goodwin of Glover, of those who were present at the letting out of Long pond to recover damages in the sum of one thousand dollars, for the loss of his mill, logs, trees and land, J. Mattocks and Griswold attorneys for plaintiff, and W. Mattocks and Baxter attorneys for defendants. On the 22nd day of August, 1810. John Kimball, Justice of the Peace, issued a subpoena, summoning David Flint, Spencer Chamberlin, and Nathaniel French of Glover, and Samuel Lord of Barton to appear as witnesses at the County court in Brownington, on the 4th Wednesday of August, 1810. The docket for that term shows the following entry. 'Con. on motion of D'fts.' The March term 1811 was held at Craftsbury, (Craftsbury and Brown- ington each being half shires of the County of Orleans at that time.) Samuel C. Crafts was the presiding judge, Timothy Stanley of Greensboro and George Nye assistant judges. The docket shows the following entry in said case. 'Committee to Jury—paper taken back by agreement of parties, Continued.' The jury was drawn and were as follows; Benjamin Mason, Ephraim Morse, Arta Nelson, Daniel Davidson, Thomas Kingsbury, Siba Stimson, Jonathan Huntington, Asah Washburn, Amos Blanchard, Levi Stevens and Macijah Dunham, Tailsman. There were summoned as witnesses for the plaintiff at that term, Samuel Lord, James Daniels, Nathaniel French, John Merriam and Jonah Allyn.

"The August term, 1811, was held at Brownington, the docket has the following entry, 'It is agreed by the parties, that this action be continued to March Term next, and that if the parties do not previously settle the same, judgment is to be then entered for the plaintiff for the sum of \$300 and his costs.'

"At the March term, 1812, held at Craftsbury, the docket entry is as follows, 'No appearance,' which would indicate that the parties had arranged the matter before the court and had agreed to let the case go off the docket that way. Thus ended the legal battle over some of the results of digging the channel into 'Long Pond,' in Glover June 6th, 1810, or one hundred years ago.

"In meeting here today to celebrate the centennial of the accidental destruction of Long pond, by this band of pioneers, which at the time was considered a catastrophe, but which proved to be one of the most fortunate meetings that ever occurred in the history of the state of Vermont. Taking into consideration the northeast shore being so low and so thin, its foundation so deceitful, and what proved to be of no stability, it was only a question of time when the waters of Long pond must have broken away. At that time the settlers, for the most part lived upon the high and open ground, and the shores of the streams were covered with thick timber. Just think of what would have been the result, if this pond had stood until now, and then gone out. The terrible results thereof would be almost beyond comprehension. The act of a man, or of a few men have many times saved the lives of a few persons; but the digging of this short ditch one hundred years ago, undoubtedly saved a vast amount of property, and hundreds of human lives; as a large share of the villages of Glover, Barton, and Orleans would have been destroyed; to say nothing of the beautiful homes the entire distance from here to the lake.

"I deplore that we do not know the names of all who took part in that work, so we could inscribe their names upon the 'Hero Roll' of the state of Vermont."